

MARKET STREET ELEVATED RAILWAY, 69TH STREET TERMINAL
Intersection of Market and 69th Streets
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-507-A

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Philadelphia Support Office
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

MARKET STREET ELEVATED RAILWAY, 69TH STREET TERMINAL HAER NO. PA-507-A

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Location: Intersection of Market and 69th Streets
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania

Note: For shelving purposes at the Library of Congress, Philadelphia was selected as the official location for all stations in the Market Street Elevated Railway documentation, although the actual location of the 69th Street Terminal is in Upper Darby, Delaware County.

USGS Quad: Lansdowne, PA and Philadelphia, PA 1:24,000
UTM Coordinates: 18.477839.4423382

Construction

Date: 1906

Builder: Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company

Chief Engineer: William S. Twining

Present Owner: Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority
1234 Market Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107

Present Use: Terminal station of the Market Street Elevated Railway

Significance: The 69th Street Terminal is the western endpoint of the Market Street Elevated Railway. The opening of the terminal in 1907 enabled passengers to make connections between the elevated railway, westward trains, and street trolleys. The station is a contributing structure within the Market Street Elevated Railway Historic District. The station is significant historically for its role in the suburban development of this area of Upper Darby Township, and architecturally for its design. Like many of the other stations along the Elevated, 69th Street Terminal embodies the distinctive characteristics of a particular early twentieth-century architectural style. An example of Romanesque-style design, the building presents an impressive brick façade with a stone colonnade and decorative brickwork.

Project Information Statement: The Market Street Elevated Railway between Millbourne Station in Delaware County and 46th Street Station in Philadelphia will be reconstructed. The project includes replacement of the Millbourne Station and the Market Street Elevated superstructure. Plans call for the reconstruction of the stations from 63rd Street to 46th Street, but efforts will be made to retain historic features where possible. To mitigate the adverse effect, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission stipulated HAER documentation of the existing structures. This documentation was undertaken to fulfill that stipulation.

Neeta Jitendra Desai
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403 East Walnut Street
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INTRODUCTION

The Market Street Elevated Railway extends west-east along Market Street between 69th Street in Upper Darby Township, Delaware County, and 46th Street in the City of Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania. Constructed between 1904 and 1908, the elevated structure is situated along Market Street between 63rd and 46th Streets. West of 63rd Street, the railway crosses Cobbs Creek, a waterway that forms the boundary between Philadelphia and Delaware Counties. From this point, the railway travels at ground level through Millbourne and terminates at the 69th Street Terminal in Upper Darby Township, Delaware County. The tracks and stations form part of the Market-Frankford Line, which is owned and operated by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA), 1234 Market Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19107.

The Market Street Elevated Railway (HAER No. PA-507) is composed of the Market Street Elevated superstructure, an associated substation (HAER No. PA-507-E), and the following railway stations: 69th Street Terminal (HAER No. PA-507-A); Millbourne Station (HAER No. PA-507-B); 63rd Street Station (HAER No. PA-507-C); 60th Street Station; 56th Street Station (HAER No. PA-507-D); 52nd Street Station (HAER No. PA-507-F); and 46th Street Station (HAER No. PA-507-G). The Market Street Elevated Railway Historic District, which consists of the Market Street Elevated Railway, was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, historical significance and Criterion C, design/construction in August 1996. The 69th Street Terminal was previously determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The 69th Street Terminal in Upper Darby Township is a two-story, rectangular-plan, Romanesque-style, brick building set upon a raised brick-and-stone foundation. The building is nine bays long and four bays wide, and is capped by intersecting gable roofs covered with asphalt shingles. Terra cotta coping accentuates the rooflines. The brick is laid in Flemish bond, with many details enhanced by the alteration of the way the brick was laid.

The main, or south, facade is pierced by an arched colonnade that fronts a sheltered entryway leading to the modern entrance doors. Two squat stone columns, whose capitals are decorated with rams' heads, support three brick semicircular arches. Groin vaulting is used as the roof support of the covered entry. At the second-floor level, another brick colonnade, consisting of a series of four columns supporting five arches, is used to accent a row of windows. Although the windows are modern one-over-one replacements, historic decorative details like the brick patterns in the arched window heads are still visible. A historic bull's eye opening above the second-floor windows is filled with more decorative brickwork, which highlights the round shape of the blind opening. At the ridgeline of the pediment, a tile datestone bears the construction date of 1906. The main facade has been altered by a modern pedestrian walkway that extends southward across Westchester Pike. Modern concrete stairways provide access to the main entrance. A large addition, which houses the bus terminals, has been appended to the west facade of the building. The remaining elevations of the building display replacement windows set in the original brick surrounds. Windows on the first floor are arch-headed paired types, set in larger arched surrounds. Windows of the second floor are simple one-over-one double-hung sash types. To the north and west of the building are located various driveways, tracks, shelters and fenced areas associated with the buildings function as the terminus of the Market Street line.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Only at a late stage in the initial planning process was the 69th Street Terminal designed as the western terminus of the Market Street Elevated. The Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company (PRT) was originally planning to end the Market Street Elevated Railway on property belonging to the Burd Orphan Asylum on the south side of West Chester Pike just west of Cobbs Creek, in the vicinity of 63rd Street. That meant the Philadelphia and West Chester Traction Company's trolley cars would have had to continue running along West Chester Pike between 63rd Street and Garrett Road to the west. A. Merritt Taylor, president of the Philadelphia and West Chester Traction Company, preferred to have the terminal built further west, at the intersection of West Chester Pike and Garrett Road because he felt it would enable a bigger and better combined facility that would include plenty of space for the traction company's cars and for future growth. PRT agreed to extend its line further west if Taylor could secure the necessary right-of-way for the elevated west of 63rd Street. Taylor had trouble obtaining the consent of some property owners, and in early 1905 he received a letter from PRT's president threatening to end the elevated at 63rd Street unless Taylor hurried up and got the land.

When construction was completed in 1907, the 69th Street Terminal was comprised of three separate stations, as well as repair shops, a power house, sidings, storage yards and other appurtenances for the maintenance of the lines. It was built in the middle of farmland where cows grazed until construction began. PRT built the main structure, with a high-ceilinged

waiting room and offices on a mezzanine level. Passengers went down steps to reach the two loading tracks. The elevated trains began running between 69th Street and 15th Street on March 5, 1907, and were extended to the Delaware River ferries in September. On the north side of the terminal was the end of the line for Philadelphia and Western Railway Company trains to Strafford, which began running on May 22, 1907. Tacked onto the western side of the PRT building was the ornate five-track train shed of the traction company, each track long enough for three cars. At the end of the tracks was a big lobby that connected with PRT's main waiting room. When the West Chester Traction Company (later the Philadelphia Suburban Transportation Company) opened its part of 69th Street Terminal on April 30, 1907, all trolleys except those running in the early hours of the morning began and ended their runs there.

The Market Street Elevated lived up to all of Taylor's expectations in creating additional traffic for the traction company's line. Business boomed, and two-car trains frequently had to be run to handle the crowds (DeGraw 1985:77-81). Foreseeing a good business opportunity, realtor John McClatchy began purchasing land in the vicinity of the new terminal, including tracts of land bordering 69th Street and West Chester Pike. Eventually he sold some of the ground along West Chester Pike to other developers, but kept the 69th Street portion for himself. As recently as 1972, all of the stores on 69th Street between Ludlow and Walnut Streets, with the exception of two buildings, were owned by McClatchy interests (Tyson 1972:168-72).

By 1919, there were many more trolleys operating in and out of the 69th Street Terminal than when it had been built in 1907, and the traffic had simply outgrown the five-track facility. The terminal was at times impossibly congested, and it became apparent that ridership would continue to grow. Unfortunately, there was really no place the terminal could expand. On the north side was the loop for elevated trains, on the east side was the PRT part of the terminal, on the south side was West Chester Pike and on the west was the throat of the terminal with all of its tracks and switches. Taylor attempted to build south into West Chester Pike. He had realized as early as 1916 that the terminal would have to be expanded, and had bought some land from John McClatchy. In 1922, West Chester Pike was moved south about 50 feet and, at a cost of \$85,000, the terminal was extended into the area that the road previously occupied. This gave the terminal three more stub-end loading tracks in addition to the original five. The expanded terminal was opened September 18, 1923. Almost immediately, stores began to be constructed on the south side of West Chester Pike (DeGraw 1985:104-7).

By the 1930s, a larger terminal was again desperately needed to handle the many bus routes that had sprung up since the original trolley building was opened in 1907. All of the buses terminating at 69th Street still had to share a single lane next to the terminal and still had to use the sidewalk as their loading platform. The situation was getting worse every year. The eight-track stub-end trolley terminus, which had been patterned after the traditional steam railroad terminals of the era, resulted in a very inefficient operation. Theoretically, three trolleys could load at once on each of the eight tracks. In actual practice usually only one or two cars loaded on each track.

These problems, though, valid as they were, could scarcely justify spending half a million dollars to rebuild the terminal during the Depression, when money was extremely difficult to raise. But A. Merritt Taylor's son, Merritt H. Taylor, who became president of the traction company in 1932, had a plan that would give him a brand new building that would pay for itself in only 15 or 20 years. The old terminal had virtually no space for stores or concessions. The only rental income came from a newsstand, which produced only a 0.03 percent return on the original terminal's investment. Literally all of the space was taken up by tracks and platforms and a waiting room. The problem facing the planners was a challenging one. A new terminal had to be capable of handling at least the same number of railcars and it would have to be big enough so that 50 buses an hour could load and unload during peak periods. Also, it would have to have enough rental space to make the building pay for its construction and operating costs.

Several plans were considered before one was finally agreed upon. The chosen plan called for a three-level building. Trolleys and buses would terminate in loops in the basement. The street floor would be filled with stores producing substantial rentals, and the second floor would be occupied by new company offices and a parking lot. Preliminary planning for this proposed building was complete in January 1934, and the next month an application was filed with the U.S. Public Works Administration requesting the \$800,000 cost of the plan. The request was denied.

Unable to raise that much money by itself, the traction company was forced to choose one of the alternate plans, and by February 1936 construction was underway. The alternate plan cost only slightly more than half as much as the original grandiose scheme, but it provided a better layout as far as passenger convenience was concerned. After leaving the elevated trains and climbing stairs to the main waiting room, passengers transferring to trolleys or buses would not encounter any more stairs. While walking through the concourses between the old PRT portion of the terminal and the new trolley and bus platforms, passengers would pass by all of the stores that Taylor managed to find room for. Although the new structure had been built on the same amount of land as the old one, there was even room found for two short sidings in which four trolley cars could be stored. The new terminal cost \$486,000, which was \$54,000 less than the original 1907 building had cost. It was financed through a \$450,000 bank loan.

A single unloading track and two loading tracks proved to be capable of handling as many trolleys as the eight stub-end tracks in the old building. The trolleys used a counterclockwise loop and the buses ran clockwise inside the trolley loop. Only a single unloading platform and a single loading platform were designed for the buses, and it wasn't long before they became overcrowded. When this happened, several routes again began terminating on West Chester Pike alongside the terminal. The Company's offices remained on the second floor of a portion of the original terminal building that was left standing. Much of the first floor of this portion was converted into a movie theater called, appropriately enough, the Terminal Theater. Plans that

show the evolution of the station during the 1920s and 1930s can be found in Ronald DeGraw's book, *Red Arrow: The First Hundred Years, 1848-1948* (1985).

An opening day celebration was held October 26, 1936, which also marked the 150th anniversary of the founding of Upper Darby Township. Hundreds of dignitaries were invited to participate in ceremonies held in the Terminal Theater. The new terminal included a travel bureau, which sold Greyhound bus tickets, rail, steamship, hotel and airplane reservations and tickets for shows and sporting events. The Terminal Travel Bureau also contained the company's lost-and-found, sold travelers' checks and travelers' insurance and arranged group bus tours during the summer (DeGraw 1985:148-51). Alterations and additions undertaken in the early 1980s included the partial reconstruction of a portion of the 1923 south wing to incorporate a new brick gable with a colonnaded opening similar to the large gable of the original structure. Aside from this gabled motif, the 1924 wing was renovated in a Postmodern Architectural style and extended to the west, to create a new bus terminal. Partial restoration of the original gabled entrance to the terminal was also undertaken, with the removal of superficial alterations that had occurred over the years. However, the restored façade was partially obscured behind a new pedestrian walkway rising over Westchester Pike and leading to the front of the building. Today, the 69th Street Station is still a major transportation hub serving buses, trolley lines, the regional rail system and the elevated. Upper Darby continues to thrive as a commercial and residential area. It is unclear what became of the Terminal Theater.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION/BIBLIOGRAPHY

Secondary Sources

DeGraw, Ronald. *Red Arrow: The First Hundred Years, 1848-1948*. Glendale, CA: Interurban Press, 1985. This book contains useful plans that show the evolution of 69th Street Terminal during the 1920s and 1930s.

Rachleff, Allison, and Mary Daughtrey. *Historic Resources Survey and Determination of Eligibility Report: Market Street Elevated Reconstruction Project, Borough of Millbourne and City of Philadelphia, Delaware and Philadelphia Counties, Pennsylvania*. Report prepared for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority. Report prepared by Cultural Heritage Research Services, Inc., North Wales, PA. 1996

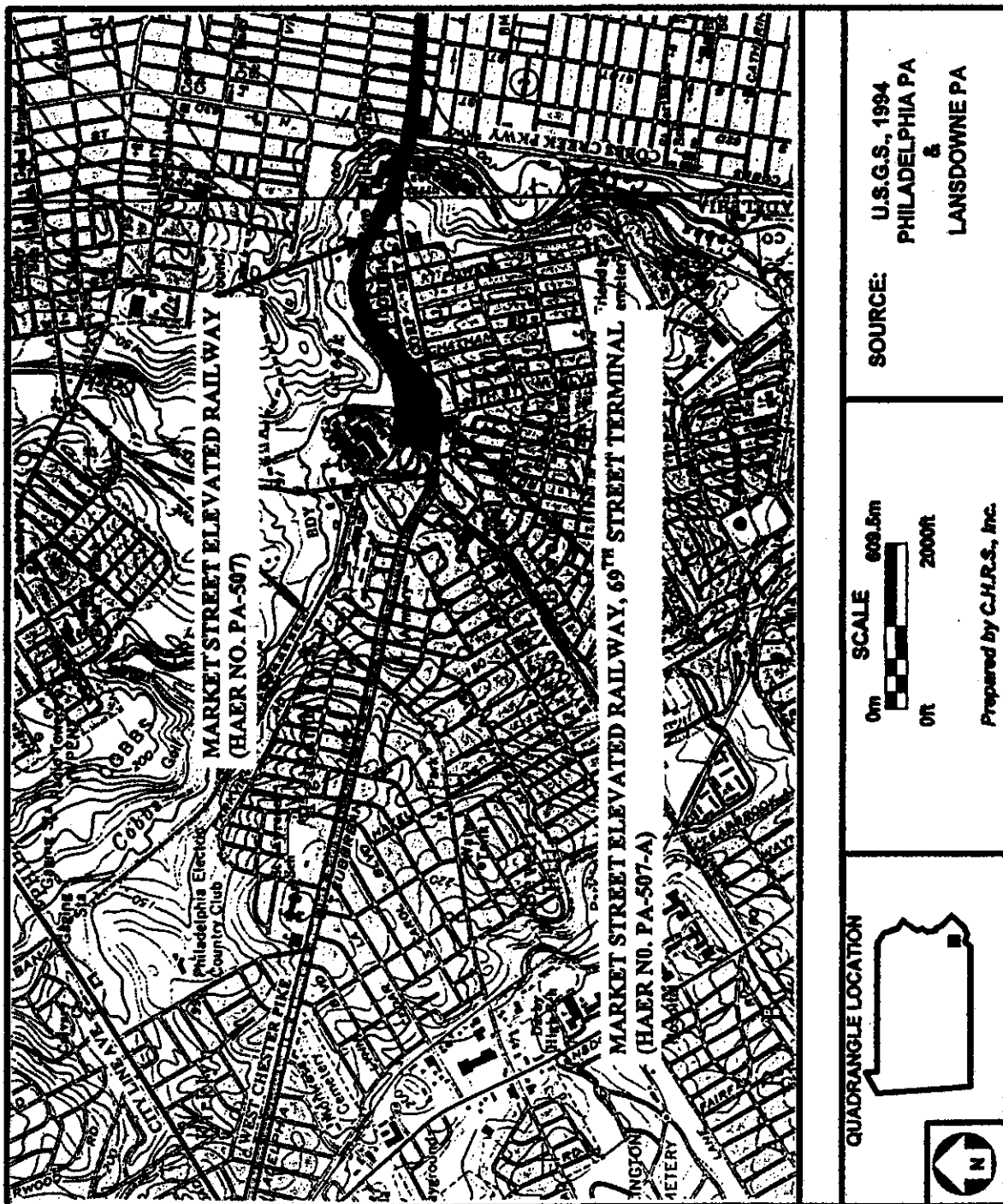
Tyson, John H. *A History of Upper Darby, Delaware County, Pennsylvania*. Philadelphia: Clark Printing House, Inc., 1972.



Additional Resources

A large collection of historic photographs is located at the Urban Archives, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA. These photos are of stations and the superstructure, construction of the line, as well as the dismantling of the Schuylkill River to 46th Street portion of the Elevated.

Cox, Harold E. *The Road from Upper Darby*. New York: Electric Railroaders' Association, Inc., 1967.

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HAER NO. PA-507-A
(PAGE 7)



<p>U.S.G.S., 1994 PHILADELPHIA PA & LANSOWNE PA</p>	<p>SOURCE:</p>	<p>QUADRANGLE LOCATION</p>  
<p>SCALE 600.5m 0m 2000ft</p>	<p>Prepared by C.H.R.S., Inc.</p>	

